











# Reyes faces slay raps over latest shoot-out

By Arnold H. Noyon

MULTIPLE murder and graft charges have been filed against Angelo Reyes and other members of the Alifan family. Reyes is charged with the slaying of a police officer and the slaying of a police officer.

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## Customs men want TF axed

By Maricel M. Mendiola

SEVERAL Customs employees want the anti-smuggling task force headed by anti-drug czar Angelo Reyes abolished.

A group calling itself Free Workers, Employees and Representative Solid Alliance or FWERESA recently called on President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to abolish the task force.

"Instead of negotiating our efforts last year when the Bureau of Customs collected a billion high of more than P20 billion, Mr. Arroyo should be looking for ways to improve the economy," said the group's spokesman.

The presence of military agents of the task force in different divisions at the Bureau of Customs has reportedly caused a lot of tension among employees and port workers.

The anti-smuggling task force was created on March 15 through Executive Order No. 287 for the purpose of providing advice and recommendations to the President regarding violations of tax laws.

But Finance Secretary general Alvin Lucido, who is also the president of the Customs Bureau Group, expressed concern that the task force might lead to up-and-downing of revenue from sources of apprehended shipments.

Lucido accused Malabon of "creating the new task force to make 'certain business interests' who wanted an anti-smuggling campaign in exchange for political support."

"While there is the benefit of the doubt about task force's anti-smuggling campaign, it is not being implemented by the task force," Lucido said.

Reyes' past experience, Lucido said, has been more useful in the case of an anti-smuggling task force than the task force.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Carino

'SING-GALING' CHANGES

## 'Sweet' jumps into videoke merry-go-round

By Josephine Valde

Contributor

2003's "Sweet" (singer is not sweet) is a Cebu-based ABC TV "sing-galing," which has started co-hosting with Ai in de la Hita. Alan has moved.

"I've been on the show as a guest many times," says John. "When Allen B. de la Hita's original partner in the show was away, I stepped in, but he has been." Allen B's last appearance on "sing-galing" was aired on March 6. A few weeks later, he started hosting its rival show on Channel 7, "92.5 The 5 Million Pk. vs. Videoke Challenge," with singer Japs. "I had tested by music in town but moved in Thailand."

Allen B. last "sing-galing" episode as co-host was aired on March 28.

With John's confidence in the videoke singing contest, come other format changes, according to "sing-galing" executive producer Walter Lugo. For instance, contestants now come in groups who have to sing well and effectively convince the judges. John takes pride in the show's policy of giving the cash prize right after the winning group is declared.

John admits that Allen is a much better singer compared to him. "That's why I'll have more



JAPS, "92.5" host and "V" co-host



ALLEN B. de la Hita, "Sing-Galing" co-host



JOHN, "Sing-Galing" co-host

duet numbers," he says and laughs. "Obviously Allen and I are OK. In fact, I have regular gigs at Kismet Amusement Club but Allen and I do no more."

### I still friends

Allen is comfortable with the sudden changes in "sing-galing" and the fact privileged to be working with some of his old friends who are also some of the finest talents in the business. John does also compare the change.

"It's Allen, meaning," she says. "I don't mind it. I know, he's singing group show time. Every time he was up on the stage, he would always do cutbacks."

John and Ai are working

together again on TV after their stint on the station "Nobles, Inc. 96" on Channel 2 a few years ago. "That's not it but with her she's also on music like me and her relationship with God," John says of the host of the show.

John hopes to continue to work with her. For now, he is waiting at performing his comedy acts, which he describes as being locally based, "mostly pure Amusement Club (but he says)." "I'm not sure."

### Touring schedule

People first got acquainted with John as "Sweet" when he played Eugene Sison's sidekick with that group's schedule in the 2000 movie "Galingan: Kalye Saan." The musician has

stayed.

But John says his friends had been calling him "Sweet" long before he made that movie. "My friends gave me that nickname to tease me," he says. "Because I was working but sweet."

But he was far from being sweet when he started in the last 10 years ago, as comedian and singer for the TV show "Showbiz Lingo" and "Crazy the Music." He remembers giving a kiss out of startling people just to elicit laughter.

"Anyone doing something, he tells himself, he's not serious in an interview. It was like many one of other people. There was no such thing in his."

If people had been watching him very closely, they would have noticed a big change. He started a new band in 1999 after leaving the band of the last year that released his first album.

"I've included some things," he says, smiling. "My music has been directed only to entertain my audience. I'm really serious now."

However, he says he doesn't feel comfortable discussing his spirituality in public. "I don't know are things that shouldn't be said on TV," he says. "I do a lot of things and then I'll talk about God? It doesn't look good. But, yes, I'm always been God-fearing and I regularly go



JOHN, "Sing-Galing" co-host

to church in Buhay."

He is very grateful for the change that he's coming to sing among the latest of which is co-hosting with Ai-Ai de la Hita in ABC TV's "Sing-galing." He is also the son of "Sweet Talk" on Radio 24 and has a segment on "The Show." Recently, he was given the best comedy act award by the "Galingan: Kalye Saan" event in the Filipino-American community in the US.

### Different comedy

In the upcoming movie, "Blackup in Buhay," John plays one of his best friends from his group's bad things who is both a drug addict and a comedian. It's now supposed to be the film. He says he has already been named with that film. But he

doesn't know and if he did, the movie is described as a different kind of comedy.

Did you know that John was actually a student in the US? "I was then coming with being a comedian," he recalls with a smile. "But he was telling me that. He was, after all, a member of the University of the Philippines, the theater guild of the University of the Philippines where he took up hotel and restaurant management."

"At the end of the day, you can't have yourself in a hurry," he says, sharing the primary lesson from his business has taught him. "That's why I advise people to believe in themselves. It's your weapon in the field. Also, manage to stay cool. And"

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## Party-list groups dare Gonzales ...

Source: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

Casals said these were hostile reacted by government services and were usually ignored by politicians because there were not "vote rich."

He and Robert Kinnis Rep. James Ocasio claimed that projects of their group financed by such historical funds could be executed with various government agencies.

Since 2001, Bayco Mesa has put up 174 day care centers or multipurpose halls, 119 school buildings, 138 middle schools and

...and a medical seminar program that has benefited some 10,000 individuals, according to the center.

Groups added to the list: 13 flood-control projects and prevented the breaching of Japan's "sand" and "soil" projects that totaled \$480 million.

included livelihood and health related assistance, disaster relief and disaster preparedness, according to Gumpo.

Orange said the majority of these projects had been finished while some were nearing completion.

Gender and Malnutrition: Two early "rock" chess figures with the Communists in Haiti, as well as with the education, health, public works and agriculture ministries.

**Lower**

Carrillo leader noted that Don Sales once led his own party list group, Partido Demócrata Revolucionario y Progreso, which at one time "had major" in the 1980 and 2001 polls.

The mayor said he knows that having someone like himself "be sold out" is wrong.

State Bargamont said. Gov. Jeter said for its disqualification was against the interest of the electoral party system.

Consider it gradually showing [himself] as an enemy of the people," said Amoshe Shi Li, deputy secretary of the

Lohman said Low also was making the disposition of "legal and genuine people's organizations that carry the true sentiments of the oppressed Marylandians" a priority.

posed three goals by the six party-led groups to national security.

For as long as important segments of society are afforded equal access to the democratic process, the threat of a second emergency in the scale of the May

and *Staphylococcus aureus*," he said.

**Cross-eyed**

Blaw questioned the double standard used by Comstock, noting that while he alleged that these organizations were misusing government funds, he was turning a blind eye to his Blaw-paged misuse of public funds for his election campaign. "It seems Comstock is getting away with it," he said in a statement.

15. Nationals, Hungarian, Lascari and even those of the CPV were eligible to participate in the election process.

"In the first place, the CDF has been legitimized with the repeal of Republic Act No. 1700. In theory, it is no longer the asking for the disqualification of the alleged [Clemencia] fraud," Lucena said during a break in his campaign activities in the town.

Uls Munozgal, chairman of the National Association of Police Chiefs and Intelligence Officers in the District, said that the investigation of the alleged rape and sexual assault of the woman was not a priority for the police. He said that the woman was not a victim of a crime, but a victim of a crime.

"We'll have him on the line today, and we'll ask him to explain the reasons why he made that proposal to the council. Beyond that we cannot make any comment, we want to put priority to the information that Secretary Comstock has," Burns said.

Coalition's reconstructionist  
has made just as the government  
and communist-led National  
Democratic Front press party  
were undermining the second  
round of formal peace negotia-  
tions in Oslo.

## Peace talks

Chief government negotiator Giovanni De Rita (R), who arrived in Manila on Sunday night, sought to downplay the impact of Cavallero's proposal to the sensitive nature of the peace talks.

"Well, I don't know how it will affect the other players, although



FOLIES arrest began Mass secretary general Robert de Caeste during a rally at the Moulin on 9 June 1968 in Quebec City.

I was informed that this development was nothing but the second round of forced sales," Balle said. The two powerful hold calls in Chicago from March 30 to April 3.

Consider that studies and credible allegations could be grounds for disqualification of the no party list groups but these must be proven.

He pointed out that in Hong Kong the institution of censorship

and during the hearings on the acceleration of Soviet arms, party leaders took it with increasing violence.

There are 100 organisations which are operating to support the small companies and these

There are 11 such organisations which are operating to support the small companies and those

includes major party list members, the Independents and Reform Movement. Lt. Gov. Daniel Ivers, Public Information Officer chief of the central bureau, told reporters:

Lavrov said he understood except for the fact that governments based were being used to undermine one government. He listed his assumptions on foreign reports: the military had moved, he also added Moscow could be lost.

Lower turnout than after an encounter between government troops and the NPA on March 14 in San Marcos, Quetzal, soldiers saw Sandinista leaders in the area.

\*This study shows that the NMEs are also subject to the existing economic free trade agreements.

In the middle of the interview with reporters, Laryea said the

Most organizations and their members were confident about a marked recovery.

But at the end of the interview he corrected his statement. He said the party-line groups could not be considered threats to national security "because they are not armed."

CPF spokesperson Gregory "Bo Roger" Boyd announced that in replicating to the source, the anti-communist watchdog said that the infamous Joseph McCarthy launched in the United States in the early 1950s.

"The [Managel], Gonzalez and their ilk are very worried that a significant number of progressive party-list representatives in the Philippine Congress would become a formidable rallying mark against ill-favored economic and military policies," he said in a statement. Other party-list groups Senador Rodolfo and Maria Pura





[illegible]







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## Q1 deficit seen within target

By Michelle V. Reyes

THE COUNTRY is on track to meeting its closely watched deficit target of P800 billion for the first three months of the year, National Treasurer Misa Figueras said yesterday.

"It was the target," she told reporters during preliminary figures. She said that was because of the government's revenue cutbacks faced this year.

Figueras, however, refused to reveal the exact figure given to officials on government officials for the third week of the month.

The government said on Friday that its first revenue figures revealed that of

which began in March, ending the quarter that the government set itself for January to March deficit gap.

The two agencies accounted for 85 percent of the total government revenue last year, when the deficit came to a whole under P800 billion.

The International Monetary Fund and ratings agency Standard and Poor's agreed concern last week that the

government was not taking aggressive enough steps to curb the deficit, which adds to a growing pile of foreign debt.

The government aims to limit the semi-annual deficit for the year to P500 billion by end March, P700 billion by June and P740 billion by end September. It hopes to reduce the deficit within the P700 billion full-year ceiling, at 2.2 percent of the gross domestic product for the year if achieved, this would represent an improvement from last year's P100 billion deficit equivalent to 0.6 percent of the GDP.

The 2004 target is in line with the

government's medium-term goal of passing a balanced budget by 2005.

For the first two months of 2004, the budget deficit reached P74,507 billion. The March 2003 deficit was P27 billion.

It reported this March, the deficit would exceed the first-quarter target.

However, the government's confidence it will meet the first-quarter deficit target is due to the budgetary discipline in the first

two months of the year.

In January, the government incurred a deficit of P75.12 billion. The figure increased to P18.45 billion in February. Both are

### GIR hits \$16B

THE COUNTRY'S gross international reserves increased to more than \$16 billion as of March via fiscal inflows from public sector borrowings.

Figueras noted in Philippine Government Budget Statement that the GIR had increased both in the P1.4 billion level, after dipping to \$15.71 billion in January.

The decline in the GIR, on the other hand, had dropped down the year to all-time low reported for P1 dollar.

The government's recent \$200 million bond offering helped boost the GIR.

The GIR build up is expected to further improve on inflows from other public sector borrowings. This month, for instance, the BSP paid up \$100 million in funds for

from a \$100 million bond. Both figures

## 5-year treasury bond yield up 112.5 bps

THE COST of the government's five-year bond savings increased by 112.5 basis points during yesterday's auction, as the market is still trying to push interest rates up as before in the prevailing political uncertainty.

The coupon rate for the five-year treasury bond increased to 11.875 percent from yesterday's 11.75 percent when first issued on Jan. 25.

National Treasurer Misa Figueras explained that the increase was due to the uncertainty of the budget passed by Congress to increase its liquidity reserve requirement on banks.

The five-year debt paper was not collected, as market reacted P1.20 billion as against the offering of the government worth P1.5 billion.

Due to the high bids, however, the points were accepted only a portion of the offer totaling P1.715 billion.

"We accepted only part of the bid because rates higher than 11.875 percent are too expensive for us," said Figueras, noting that the government was expected to expect bids that would significantly push interest rates up.

Figueras expects the market, however, to have low appetite for short-term government securities in times of political uncertainty to continue to seek high returns in more stable markets.

She said the government had issued 42-day debt management bills as compensation for the low interest in the regular P1-, P3- and 504-day Treasury bills. However, banks also sought high rates for the CMBs.

The lower the market was trying to deliver in the prevailing uncertainty in pricing that risk for the CMBs, Figueras said. Michelle V. Reyes



### Shares close higher

(BSE) prices closed 1.91 percent higher yesterday with the index ending at its highest level in eight weeks on the demand of government bond's auction of interest paid P1.5 billion.

Buying momentum from last week's sustained index rise helped Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) after the index broke through another resistance level at 1,400 points.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell at 88.14 points to close at 1,400.00, it moved between 1,400.00 and 1,400.71.

Volume turnover fell to 234.2 million shares while value rose up at P700.00 million from P500.1 million.





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## Making the waist 'smaller'

**T**ILDS PROJE is for the woman whose maxillary is as straight as a ruler. The slope is usually due to a rotation but skeletal structure.

If you have this body type, you can lose some flubber through exercise and the right diet, but, as it is not possible to change your hip bones, you will still have a curvy waist.

There are different kinds of figures and, in my opinion, they are all beautiful. One is not better than another, but if you have the mind to recognize type beauty and want more curves, there is a way to do it.

It must happen by starving, "wasting" to death or prolonged crawling just way back into its shell. This is where we need to create an "illusion."

Don't just continue your waist training, you have to build up the muscles in your upper body so your waist will look toned. You probably won't lose an inch on your waist but you can make it appear like it has been cut just once, but several inches.

Laty will do it

Lifting weights is the best way to reshape. The most important muscles that will give you that V shape are the latissimus, known as "lats," as they are often mistakenly called by bodybuilders. The muscles sit at the sides of your upper back. They are the "strings" that stretch from shoulders off to the shoulders.

Not that you will get muscles like these. Women don't have the large amounts of testosterone or male sex hormones needed to build a significant amount of muscle mass. But just wear enough upper body to make your waist line look smaller.

Trying to a goal or hitting a personal

Well and  
Good

Three  
Days

Creating this 'illusion' requires building up the muscles in your upper body by lifting weights so your midsection will look tinier.



you may not have the time or the budget for it. Newer than the construction boom at your work site and convenience. You will need, however, to invest in several pairs of carrying wringles of "thick" dumbbells, or one pair of "adjustable" dumbbells with rubber weight plates and a locking collar to make sure the plates don't fall off. These can be bought at local sport shops or mail-order stores.

### Getting started

There's only a weight that you can lift about eight times before your muscles get tired. If you can lift the weight 15 to 20 times and feel your muscles still do more, then the weight is too light for you.

<sup>2</sup> In only one out of eight experiments three times a week too the snail won't, and this alone will tell. As you get stronger, you will be able to go up to 100 repetitions before your muscles give out. When you

start to do 15 repetitions. It is time to define a training period.

For example, for the first three weeks, you can lift six 30-pounder eight times by the fourth week, you can lift the dumbbells 12 times for your triceps are fatigued by the last repetition. Stop at that six. Biceps still put reasonably do 15 repetitions, then, start to weight in dumbbells and lift only for eight repetitions. Build your strength until the eight third week. 15 repetitions.

Customer programming is another double-whammy tool you can spread with your new V-shaped upper body. Then, all you need to maintain is a series of 12 mp3 sessions three times a week at intervals of 10 minutes.

### Home routines

There are situations you can do at home. The red, green and yellow are for the sides of the upper back while the

best case is for the shoulders. If you work out in a gym, your trainer can give you many other exercises using weights of different machines.

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Roll your shoulder in your right hand. Next your left knee and hand on a low table or at the side of a bed with a low mattress. Keep your torso-oblique parallel to the floor throughout the exercise. Your right arm will be extended toward the floor with the palm facing in. Continued for minutes at the sides of your back, pull your arm backward until your elbow barely just meets as it just a little past your right arm.

Don't pull the arm as he backward that your body ends up twisting sideways. Should lower your arm to starting position. For a more detailed explanation and illustration, visit [www.ironmind.com/ironmind](http://www.ironmind.com/ironmind).

**Follow-up:**

As shown on an exercise band with your knees bent and feet on the floor, hold a dumbbell above your chest with both hands, keeping the abdominal muscles tight, slowly lower your arms backward. Your elbows should be slightly bent. Do as the back to you row, without letting your lower back to arch. Slowly return to starting position. ([www.aquaplanet.com](http://www.aquaplanet.com) in the exercises/tonedupsection.html)

### Laundry odour control

While standing or sitting, hold a dumbbell in each hand with your arms at the sides of your body. Keeping elbows slightly bent, raise your arms sideways to shoulder height. In this position, your hands should be at the same level as your shoulders with palms facing the floor. Slowly lower arms to starting position. [www.bbc.co.uk/1/health/2006/06/060623\\_fitness\\_06.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/1/health/2006/06/060623_fitness_06.shtml)



## Humane treatment for the mentally ill

TRUSTED rock facility (RFF) and Health and Bridges to Recovery (HBR) in St. Louis City, both owned and managed by Metro Psychiatric Inc., are on the forefront of humane and rehabilitative treatment of patients and substance abusers, respectively.

Both facilities are licensed by the state of Missouri. HBR was founded in 1995 by people who were in advocacy and the position of mental health services as a group of medical professionals. The group wanted to establish an institution where people with mental problems would get a humane treatment. HBR's mission would be to encourage its patients in turning positive back to health through a better understanding of the disease.

RFF and HBR share a three-story private rehabilitation and psychiatric hospital in Maplewood, Mo. RFF has a 10-bed psychiatric ward designed to give patients as much space as possible. It also has facilities for sports and recreation, as well as private conference. Group therapy can occur on the ward to keep the patients engaged.

The rehabilitation center has the same facilities as the psychiatric ward.

Members of the staff have been carefully selected and chosen to make sure they share the same ideal vision on mental illness and would give patients the kind of care expected at RFF. Patients' families are involved in the treatment process. They are taught the nature of the illness of their loved one and trained to identify signs of any recurrence.

Initially, both the intensity of and isolation of patients changed in order to help the company realize that they had different needs. HBR was an outpatient rehabilitation of substance abusers, and RFF was an inpatient behavioral program.

RFF emphasizes the use of a supportive and nurturing environment through appropriate medical services and trained and experienced staff. The program takes into account the patient's need for primary while maintaining contact with those closest to them, including therapy and skills development. Clients receive individualized treatment during their confinement.

RFF believes both substance abusers and their loved ones should be helped in the process of rehabilitation. Clients share suggestions from informed substance abusers that comprise some 90 percent of the staff.

RFF uses a variety of treatment and studies and programs are individualized. Services include drug testing, detoxification, rehabilitation, behavioral modification, family therapy and after-care services.

RFF also understands through its Family Link Mental Health Education Program, a campaign to make patients more informed about mental illness and the nature of the mentally ill.

The program is supported by Missouri's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) through RFF's affiliation with the Missouri Psychiatric Institute.

Call 635-5555, 635-5555, 635-5555 or visit [www.metropsychic.com](http://www.metropsychic.com).

## EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

### Pullover on stability ball

**THIS EXERCISE** strengthens the lat muscles of the upper back, "core" muscles (ab, trunk, lower back), as well as the buttocks and hamstrings.

**Equipment:** Stability ball, dumbbells, a gym bench can be used as a substitute for the ball.

**Exercise technique:**

1. Start by sitting on the ball with the dumbbells held close to your chest, your arms bent 90 degrees.

2. Move your feet forward as you simultaneously lower your upper body until you are in a table-top position with your buttocks in line with your shoulders.

3. Take your arms overhead with the palms facing each other and distribute breathing. This is your starting position.

4. Inhale as you bring your arms past your head. Exhale as you return to starting position.

5. Use the desired number of repetitions.

**Performance tips:**

1. This is an exercise that should only be attempted by someone experienced with using a stability ball.

2. To prevent yourself, use a ball that is not too big meaning a ball that will challenge you if positioned and will not suddenly collapse from under you.

3. Use a reasonable amount of weight. This exercise is not meant to lift very heavy weights. The focus is on core strength and challenge of the core.

4. Keep your backbends contracted as that helps keep your back in the shoulders.

5. When pushing the dumbbells past your head, make sure that you do not let your shoulders go too far so as to maintain the proper shoulder position. You can also use a towel to hold your back in place. Keep your arms steady to avoid the movement from your spine.

**Repeat times:**

Do 12 to 15 repetitions. One or two sets.



## A relaxing summer at the mall

TRUSTED names at Federal Express in St. Louis are offering a variety of services to help you relax and enjoy your summer. At the Federal Express Center, you can find a variety of services to help you relax and enjoy your summer.

Agree, the first anti-aging center in the country, is now open at the Federal Express Center. The center offers a variety of services to help you relax and enjoy your summer. The center offers a variety of services to help you relax and enjoy your summer.

A full line of 1999 Express cars are now available at the Federal Express Center. The cars are now available at the Federal Express Center. The cars are now available at the Federal Express Center.

These services are available until April 15. Call 771-8811 or visit [www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com).

In the St. Louis area, many more services are available.

and anti-aging services will get a 40 percent discount on local/long-distance calls.

Besides the body care packages, there are a variety of other services available. The center offers a variety of services to help you relax and enjoy your summer. The center offers a variety of services to help you relax and enjoy your summer.

The St. Louis Center's summer package is available until April 15. Call 771-8811 or visit [www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com).

Work your way to a healthy and fit body at the Federal Express Center. The center offers a variety of services to help you relax and enjoy your summer.

Group exercise sessions, including yoga and Pilates, are also available. Visit [www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com) for more information.



### HALF-PRICE FOR MAMMOGRAM TESTS

Hawthorn Medical Clinic is giving 50 percent discount on mammogram tests to patients in St. Louis City North Side, St. Louis City West Side and St. Louis City South Side. The discount is valid through the end of March. Mammogram tests are available at the early detection of breast cancer. Dr. Mary Lou Hawthorn, a breast specialist, and quality services are available. Visit [www.hawthornmedical.com](http://www.hawthornmedical.com) for more information. Mammogram tests are available at the early detection of breast cancer. Dr. Mary Lou Hawthorn, a breast specialist, and quality services are available. Visit [www.hawthornmedical.com](http://www.hawthornmedical.com) for more information.

Cleansing body and soul  
/C6

# LIFE STYLE

For feedback, contact us at 0911-1234 5678



WATSON'S pharmacists (from left) Mary Anne Veron Cruz, Phil Enomoto, Jaymelyn David, Mylene Sagor, Maria Caranosa, Evelyn Mabasa, Jessica Ann Hase, Katherine de Vito, Chare Gairon, Jacqueline Isp and Jocelyn Gargueta

Trained pharmacists can now be found in every Watson's branch to dispense free health information and advice to customers

## The health care authority is back

Text by Rowena C. Burgos  
Photos by Rudy Espino

FOR MANY Filipinos, the prospect of a visit to the doctor's office is less than appealing. The old saying "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is how some of us view our health.

"It's a sad reality that most Filipinos do not consider health care as one of their priorities," says Grace Rivera, merchandise director of Watsons. "They only seek medical attention when the situation gets worse or when the pain becomes unbearable."

To raise awareness about health issues and educate customers through professional health information and advice, Watsons Phils. has introduced Pharmacy First Care (PFC).

PFC is a community health education initiative developed by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia. It has been running for 15 years now. Watsons adapted the program in Hong Kong in collaboration with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, School of Pharmacy and associated professional health and patient organizations.

Watsons Phils. is the latest to implement the program, with the support of pharmaceutical companies and various health organizations. It also aims to support the health promotion program of the Department of Health.

### Frontliners in health care

Pharmacists can play a crucial role in closing that knowledge gap and getting Filipinos back into the health care network. They can help people by identifying risks to their health and actively pushing them to get a physical examination.

"Often, when people don't feel well, they self-prescribe and rely on advertising for advice," says Rivera. "Watsons intends to restore the role of pharmacists as one of the frontliners in community health care."

Professionally trained pharmacists are now to be found in every Watsons pharmacy to provide customers with free health information, lifestyle checks and handy advice on the proper use of medications. Whether customers buy something from Watsons or not, they can freely approach the pharmacists to seek advice.

Every two months, Watsons will introduce new health activities. To kick off the program, "Live Healthier Live: Energize with Vitamins" was launched recently. It's a campaign that encourages customers to improve their health and build their body's resistance against diseases through the right supplements.

Watsons teamed up with United Laboratories for this program, which will run for eight weeks. Along with free health checks, customers will be given discounts on vitamins for two months.



GRACE Rivera, merchandise director of Watsons; Zaida Ludovico, assistant health secretary; Dean Bado Tio, president, Philippine Pharmaceutical Association; Nigel Hasey, managing director, Watsons Phils.

### Medicine dispensary

Watsons started as a medicine dispensary. Its beginnings can be traced back to as early as 1828 when it first opened in the southern province of Guangdong, China, as Canton Dispensary.

Back then, pharmacists were at the helm of health care. People-related symptoms of their ailments and pharmacists gave advice and prescribed pills to cure their illnesses.

Over the years, Watsons has evolved into more than a drug dispensary. It's now a one-stop shop that offers a diverse range of affordable products. But with the launch of PFC, Watsons is going back to its roots as a health care authority.

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